

IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of the claims in the application.

Listing of the claims

1 – 4. (Canceled)

5. (Previously Presented) A mutant strain of *P. fluorescens* selected from the group consisting of the mutant strain Pf201, Pf2012, Pf2013, Pf20118, Pf20137, Pf20118algIJΔ, Pf20118algFΔ, Pf20118AlgLH203R and Pf201MC.

6. (Canceled)

7. (Previously Presented) The mutant strain of *P. fluorescens* of claim 5, wherein the said mutant strain is selected from the group consisting of: Pf2012, Pf2013, Pf20118, and Pf20137.

8 - 9. (Canceled)

10. (Previously Presented) The mutant strain of *P. fluorescens* of claim 5, wherein the said mutant strain is selected from the group consisting of: Pf20118algIJΔ and Pf20118algFΔ.

11. (Canceled)

12. (Previously Presented) The mutant strain of *P. fluorescens* of claim 5, wherein the said mutant strain is Pf20118AlgLH203R.

13 - 14. (Canceled)

15. (Previously presented) The mutant strain of *P. fluorescens* of claim 5, wherein the said mutant strain is Pf201MC.

16-37. (Canceled)

38. (Currently Amended) A mutant strain of *P. fluorescens* ~~being strain Pf201 or a variant thereof or a mutant strain of P. fluorescens which has the characteristics of strain Pf201 in relation to alginate production~~, wherein said variant or mutant strain produces at least 10 g alginate per liter medium and is stable over at least 60 generations.

39. (Previously Presented) The mutant *P. fluorescens* strain of claim 38 which has a mutation corresponding to the mutation in strain Pf201 which results in alginate production at the level of at least 10g alginate per liter medium.

40. (Previously Presented) The mutant strain of *P. fluorescens* of claim 38, wherein said mutant strain produces at least 10 g alginate per 40-55 g carbon source per liter medium.

41. (Previously Presented) The mutant strain of *P. fluorescens* of claim 38, wherein said mutant strain produces at least 10 g alginate per 50-55 g carbon source per liter medium.

42. (Previously Presented) The mutant strain of *P. fluorescens* of claim 38, wherein said mutant strain produces at least 10 g alginate per 40 g carbon source per liter

43. (Previously Presented) The mutant strain of *P. fluorescens* of claim 38, wherein the said mutant produces an alginate consisting of mannuronate residues only.
44. (Previously Presented) The mutant strain of *P. fluorescens* of claim 38, wherein the said mutant produces alginate having a defined guluronate residue (G)-content between 0 and 30%.
45. (Previously Presented) The mutant strain of *P. fluorescens* of claim 38, wherein the said mutant produces alginate without, or with a reduced number of O-acetyl groups.
46. (Previously Presented) The mutant strain of *P. fluorescens* of claim 38, wherein the said mutant produces alginate with a molecular weight of between 50,000 and 3,000,000 Daltons.
47. (Previously Presented) The mutant strain of *P. fluorescens* of claim 38, wherein the mutant strain further comprises a mutant gene selected from the group consisting: a mutant *algG* gene, a mutant *algI* gene, a mutant *algJ* gene, a mutant *algL* gene, and a mutant *algF* gene.
48. (Previously Presented) The mutant strain of *P. fluorescens* of claim 38, wherein the mutant strain further comprises a mutant *algG* gene which encodes an epimerase enzyme having reduced epimerase activity.
49. (Previously Presented) The mutant strain of *P. fluorescens* of claim 38, wherein the mutant strain further comprises a mutant *algG* gene which is inactivated.
50. (Previously Presented) A biologically pure bacterial culture of the mutant strain of *P. fluorescens* of claim 38.

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51-64. (Canceled)